

SHREVEPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT

FlashPoint

Volume 2 Number 3

To Protect and Preserve Life, Property and the Environment

Fall 2002

inside...

Fire Chief's Column

September 11 Quilt

New Fire Stations

Make a Wish

Yearbook Update

Aviation Task Force

Front Line Headlines

Awards Banquet

Promotions &

Retirements

Editorial

FlashPoint is the official newsletter of the
Shreveport Louisiana Fire Department



VOTERS SAY YES!

- **Shreveport approves tax proposition to increase firefighter and police officer salaries**

On Tuesday, November 5, like most of the country, Shreveport citizens went to the polls to cast their ballots for U.S. Senators, Congressmen, state amendments, and the usual array of political propositions but none was more important in the history of the Shreveport Fire and Police Departments than the one entitled "CITY OF SHREVEPORT PROPOSITION SALES TAX FOR POLICE AND FIRE SALARIES, EQUIPMENT AND BENEFITS."

The night of the voting, firefighters, police officers and their families and friends gathered around a 10 inch television monitor at Shreveport's Convention Hall to watch history. From the posting of the first returns, showing a plus 70 percent approval around 8:05 p.m., the measure that would lift Shreveport public safety workers to the Southern Regional Average, never showed any signs of failing. When all was said and done, the citizens of Shreveport has approved the measure overwhelmingly by an unbelievable 77 percent for and only 23 percent against.

Never in the history of tax propositions could anyone remember a measure passing with such numbers and bipartisan support. The demographics of the favorable responses are across the board and bridge every group of voters. Firefighters and police officers, **See Voters , pg. 3**

Construction for New Stations Set to Begin



Construction on Shreveport's two newest fire stations, including a new Central Fire Station, pictured here, is set to begin before the end of the year. **See full story inside on page 4**

VOTERS SAY YES!

Chief's Column

Congratulations everyone. We did it! On November 5, 2002, the citizens of Shreveport overwhelmingly passed our 1/4 cent sales tax proposition for our firefighters and police officers. We have made HISTORY! Never before has our community attempted such an initiative with such great support and success. Passing the sales tax has confirmed several things I have known for a long time: there is nothing we can't accomplish when we work together; hard work

really does pay off; we have the most satisfied customers in the world, and with God nothing shall be impossible.

Mayor Keith Hightower played a most significant role in supporting our sales tax proposition during his re-election year. We owe a lot to our Mayor. Be sure and let him know how much we appreciate his commitment and support the next time you see him. Both fire and police personnel worked very hard for the passage of the tax. The executive board of Local 514 played a huge role in our campaign

and shared all associated expenses with the police officers union. A special thanks to Brian Crawford, Margene McCoy and Ivory Wiggins for being the core committee in our initiative. These men worked extremely hard throughout the entire campaign.

As prescribed by the legislation, 90% of the revenue is dedicated to salaries, personnel and benefits and 10% is dedicated for equipment. Beginning January 2003, our members will receive the 2% longevity pay increase, plus an 18.5% pay increase provided by the sales tax. On the equipment side, we are replacing all mobile data terminals for more technologically advanced models that will provide emergency response personnel with more practical data and more functions for company officers. Administrative chiefs are currently assessing equipment needs to establish priorities on additional equipment purchases.

The impact you had on the citizens by standing in the rain with our signs and punch cards made a big difference. A great many of our citizens have communicated to me that it was the thing that help them make up their mind. Some had their minds made up against us. Seeing our efforts in the intersections changed their mind. The "THANK YOU!" campaign was the icing on the cake. So many people have mentioned how much it touched them to see us out again after the election, just to say thanks. So now I want to say THANK YOU for your cooperation and hard work.

Now it is time for us to go to a whole new level of service and professionalism. Our strategic plan is changing dramatically. We have reached goals in three and a half years that we thought would take us five to ten years to achieve. It is a great time to be a member of the Shreveport Fire Department, but we are not about to let up now. There are still significant challenges and opportunities that are ours for the taking. With a supportive Mayor, strong administrative

and operations' leadership, and teamwork with Local 514's executive board, we are going to do great things to secure the future of the Shreveport Fire Department.

I will be presenting a live broadcast soon to share the details of our goals for 2003, but here is a snap-shot of administrative issues: Completion of the paramedic class of 2002 and starting a class of fifteen to twenty new paramedics; Purchase and implement electronic reporting system; Continue implementation of information technology strategic plan; Begin the process for CAI Accreditation for the entire department; Develop a lease/purchase fire truck replacement program; enhance local emergency preparedness for weapons of mass destruction, and develop secure solutions to the FRS pension deficit.

Contracts will be awarded for the relocation of Central Fire Station and Station Thirteen in early December (see story, pg. 4). The ground breaking ceremonies will be scheduled by the time this publication is printed. These projects have taken a long time to develop. A special thanks to Rex Shamburger for his leadership as our project manager.

The following is an overview of current operational issues in progress. The bid for our four new pumpers has been awarded to Ferrara Fire Apparatus. Our committee of fire line personnel will be traveling soon to Holden, La. for the pre-conference. We expect delivery by July of 2003. Training is ongoing for the transition of our breathing apparatus from MSA to Scott. Full delivery and transition is expected by the end of January. Because the bid that allowed the purchase of Rescue Nine expired, we are required to go through the entire bid process for Rescue One. It will be approximately nine months before delivery of the new Rescue One. We will begin renovations on the old station four on Snow Street for the Fire Investigation Section of our Fire Prevention Bureau. The project will be complete by April 2003.

Our P.I.A.L. fire rating evaluation is complete. We are very confident that we will exceed the points we achieved in 1998 and will sustain our rating of class one. Our success is attributed to a great partnership with the DOS Water Department and efficient planning by our administrative chiefs. Chief Brian Hollins did an excellent job as project manager. We expect to receive official confirmation in December or early January.

To whom much is given, much is required. In order to raise the bar of professionalism and service we must continue to improve upon the things that impact the success of our mission and enhance firefighter safety and survival. Our standard for daily training must be taken seriously. Maintaining and strengthening our knowledge, skills and abilities is vitally important to ensuring satisfied customers and reducing the potential of our firefighters to be seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

Remember, there is a direct correlation between how we treat each other and how we serve the public. To give the citizens our best, we must give each other our best everyday. Say yes as often as you can. Always do more than they expect you to do. Always be nicer than the expect you to be. We have accomplished a lot together. We have a lot to celebrate. **THE BEST IS YET TO COME!** _



Kelvin J. Cochran
Fire Chief

Voters cast ballots 3 to 1 in favor of firefighters and police officers

continued from page 1

working closely with the administration of Shreveport Mayor Keith Hightower and area state representatives were able to get the legislation introduced this summer in Baton Rouge that placed the proposition on the November ballot. The tax would be in the form of a quarter cent sales tax and the revenue would be strictly dedicated to firefighter and police salaries and benefits, with 10 percent going to new equipment.

When asked about the large margin of victory, Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran responded that he believed that the vote was a referendum on the past performance and future expectations of the department. "The brave men and women of the Shreveport Fire Department have performed at an exceptionally high level over the years and the citizens have come to expect, and rightfully so, highly skilled, highly trained, and competent individuals when they call 911. This passage of this initiative insures that we will meet and exceed that expectation well into the future," said Cochran.

An aggressive public relations and ad campaign did not get into high gear, by design, until two weeks before the election. Members from both fire and

police departments put together a unified committee to tackle the large task of getting the message out to the voters. Soon, billboards adorning pictures of firefighters and police officers could be seen lining Shreveport streets. Full and half page color ads were placed in the local paper the week before and a radio ad from Mayor Hightower played continuously over every station in the area in the days before the voters went to the polls.

The final push had firefighters doing what they do best -

interacting with the public. Standing on the corners of every major intersection at busy times the day before and the day of the elections, firefighters were able to connect with the public by holding printed signs asking for their support and passing out literature with a sample ballot imprinted on its cover.

After the election, firefighters and police officers expressed their gratitude and thanks with a full page color ad in the following Sunday edition of The Times. They also took to the streets one more time. Only this time they had signs that said, "THANK YOU SHREVEPORT." —



Firefighters manned intersections day of election



September 11 Quilt Presented to Fire Department

Idea came to District Chief's wife

by Melissa Lewis

On the morning of September 11, 2001, my husband, District Chief Barry Lewis and I were watching the events of 9-11 on TV. When those towers came down, we knew firefighters had died in those brief seconds. We had no idea the losses would total a sum equivalent to 3/4 of our own fire department.

I wanted to contribute something as the memories of my own years as a firefighter reminded me of the kinship felt by all in the profession. When some friends suggested a quilt, it seemed a good way to never let that day be forgotten.

And so it began at my home every Thursday night. It started with several quilters but life's strains and demands took most away except for one, Aly Crawford. It meant as much to her as it did me, for she had just moved here from New York City. She stayed committed and helped me stay committed to seeing the project through.

Through history, it seems each generation has its own unique sacrifices. I don't want future generations of firefighters to forget what their brothers in New York City sacrificed that day in September. The quilt is meant to be that physical reminder of those lives lost.

The quilt contains the emblems of both the Shreveport Fire Department and the New York City Fire Department. I need to thank Captain John Vailes for the SFD patch and Aly's boss, Shane Dugger, for the FDNY patch.

And special thanks to my own personal hero, my husband, who said we'd never finish. I amazed you again. —

Editors note - Melissa Lewis was a Shreveport firefighter for nine years and was one of the department's first paramedics. Her last year of service was 1991. The 9-11 Quilt is proudly displayed on the wall in the Fire Chief's office.

VISIT US AT
www.shreveportfire.org

New Fire Stations to Provide Shreveport with State of the Art Facilities

Central Fire Station to house administrative offices in separate wing

by Mary Anne Tompkins

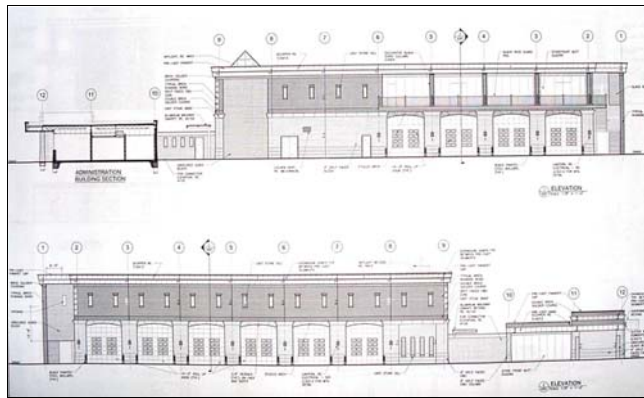
Bids will be opened on December 10, 2002 for the new Central Fire Station, and construction will be completed within a year. The Central Station Committee has worked countless hours to assist the architect in designing a state-of-the-art station to meet the needs of our personnel as they work and live at the station, both now and in the future.

New Central (pictured right) will consist of a two-story station with an attached administrative office wing. The location is on Southwestern Electric Power Company Entrance Road at North Common. Four pull through bays and two back-in bays share space with a workout room, driver's office area and ventilated turn-out gear storage, and an outside storage room. And yes, there will be an area with running water for cleaning fish!

Upstairs in the "public" area are separate offices for the assistant chief and chief's aide, district chief, EMS supervisor, an enlarged captain's office, library and large meeting



Artist rendition of the main lobby in the administrative wing of new Central Fire Station



room. The kitchen features a work island and lots of storage space!

An outside stairwell leads to a balcony that overlooks Cross Bayou and opens into the kitchen area. The "private" area has 23, count 'em, 23, individual bedrooms besides those for the assistant and district chiefs, and separate mens and women's showers/restrooms. Also on this side are a study and game room.

The administrative wing is a single story with large windows down the North Common side. It is

connected to the station by an enclosed walkway. Visitors will enter into the lobby and see a glass case opening into a large conference room. All the offices will open into a wide center hallway. The Chief Safety Officer and the EMS division will also have offices here. The administrative staff is excited about having a break room more than one person can fit in, and both mens and women's restrooms.

These are just a few of the improvements the personnel of Central station can look forward to. This project has been in the planning stages for years, but the end is in sight and new Central will be worth the wait.

Bids for west Shreveport's newest fire station, Stations 13, are also due to be opened in December. This modern styled station will feature three drive through bays and the best ideas of Shreveport's most recently built stations with some new and innovative features. Station 13 will be on the corner of Cottonwood Boulevard and West 70, across from Turner Elementary and Huntington High School. Construction should be completed within one year of the bid opening. —



Architectural rendition of west Shreveport new Fire Station 13



Firefighters Fulfill Wish for Seriously Ill Youth

A twelve year old battling cancer celebrates her last round of chemotherapy with a "No Mo' Chemo" party at Ford Park on Monday, June 2, thanks to the combined efforts of local Shreveport firefighter heroes, retailers, and a nonprofit organization.

Phyllicia Chitman, "PJ", has been battling rhabdomyosarcoma, a cancer of the muscle tissue, for the past year. Now at the end of her chemotherapy protocol, PJ finally has entered into remission and longed for a huge bash to commemorate this milestone. The Shreveport Fire Department assisted the Children's Wish Foundation International in making the a day eventful for PJ and her family. Children's Wish Foundation presented PJ with her very own state of the art laptop computer of her dreams, allowing her to keep up with schoolwork and friends in the coming school year. Firefighters grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, the Fire Department clowns, "Zip" and "Zap", entertained the crowd along with a special robot and the Children's Safety Team. _

Last Call for Yearbook Orders!

Remember to order your copy of the Shreveport Fire Yearbook now! Only the number of books pre-ordered and paid for will be published, no extras will be printed. You only have until December 31st to place your order, so don't miss out - reserve your copy now! Don't be the only one not to have one of these special books! Come by Central Fire Station, 801 Crockett Street, or call 318/673-6650 for order form or visit the department's web site at www.shreveportfire.org

Remember to return your proofs to the photographer with the pose you choose to go in the book. _

Aviation Task Force Completes Live Fire Training

- New Aviation Task Force Chief, Gary Caskey takes reins of Regional Airport operations

by Gary Caskey, Aviation Task Force Chief

The Shreveport Fire Department Aviation Task Force (ATF) participated in and completed their FAA mandated "Live Fire Training," during the third and fourth weeks of September. As in previous years, the training or "burn" as it is commonly known, was held in Bossier City at Barksdale Air Force Base (BAFB). The entry team was led by select SFD Captains, under the direct supervision and direction of their respective ATF Shift Coordinators. All shifts and entry teams are to be commended as they performed exceptionally well under very difficult and challenging conditions.

The propane fueled pit burn, with aircraft mock-up furnished by BAFB, is a multi-million dollar facility. The Department is grateful for the hospitality and cooperation of Barksdale, their personnel, and the use of their facility. This type of inter-agency cooperation not only saves the Fire Department and the city of Shreveport tens of thousands of dollars, it also creates a positive relationship between the two agencies that may one day be called on in the event of an emergency. _ *Editors Note: Jim "Sonny" Miller recently retired after 24 years of service, the last seven as the first Chief of the Aviation Task Force. We wish Jim well in his retirement. The Department congratulates and wishes incoming Chief, Gary Caskey, a 20 year Department veteran, much success. Chief Caskey officially took the reins of airport operations on November 1, 2002.*



Members of the Shreveport Fire Department Aviation Task Force train on a mock-up aircraft during a "live burn" at Barksdale Air Force Base.

YEARBOOK DEADLINE : Dec. 31,2002

YEARBOOK DEADLINE : June 30,2002

Reserve Your Copies Today!

Send your check/money order to:

Shreveport Fire Yearbook , 801 Crockett Street , Shreveport, LA 71101

‡ Please reserve _____ Copies of the *Shreveport Fire Department* _____

Deluxe Edition, Only \$50.00!

Name

‡ Please reserve _____ Copies of the *Shreveport Fire Department*
Collector's Edition, Only \$70.00!

‡ Front Cover Name Embossing - \$6.00.

Address

‡ Books may be picked up at the Fire Department Headquarters
after completion. Times to be later announced,

Zip

City

State

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Phone

1-Shreveport Fire - HB - For Office Use Only

Ck# _____	Amount _____	Date _____
-		

_____ Please print name to be embossed (up to 24
spaces) on cover here.

FRONT LINE HEADLINES

The following SFD news items are excerpts from press releases issued by the Fire Department's Public Information Office and can be viewed in their entirety on the Department's web page: www.shreveportfire.org

Ten Vehicle Accident Closes I-220 Bridge and Sends Three to Hospital

July 10 - An accident scene that is more familiar to the super-highways of California unfolded this morning on Interstate-220 at the Red River bridge as an 18-wheeler jumped the center concrete divider and set off a chain reaction of accidents that involved 10 vehicles and sent three people to the hospital. The accident occurred just before 11:30 a.m. under clear and sunny skies when the tractor trailer, traveling east on I-220 slammed into the cement divider in the middle of the bridge over Red River. The entire cab portion of the 18-wheeler surged over the wall and into the oncoming lanes of west bound traffic (see photo, pg. 7)

Fire Department to Recognize 81-year-old Grandmother for Heroism

September 9 - The Shreveport firefighters that responded to the Glen Retirement Village on September 1, 2002, are still talking about the incredible actions of 81-year-old Carolyn Kelly. Kelly is being recognized for her unselfish and heroic actions after witnessing a car plunge into one of the Village's ponds.

Kelly said at the time there was no one else around, which left her little choice but to jump a fence, shed extra clothing and dive into the water. After getting in the water, Kelly made her way over to the passenger side of the vehicle, which was sinking nose first into the 12-foot pond, and located 83-year-old Nina Hutchinson. Ms. Kelly was able to hold Ms. Hutchinson's head above the water until firefighters could arrive and pull the woman from the water.

"No one can ask more of a civilian than that" said Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran. Chief Cochran will also recognize Captains Marty Moss and Todd Cash and firefighters John King, Marco Tucker, Donald Ferguson, Jason Curtis for their actions during the rescue and treatment of Ms. Hutchinson.

Firefighters Battle 3-Alarm Apartment Fire

September 29 - Shreveport firefighters

battled a three-alarm apartment fire this morning that left one building destroyed and residents glad to have escaped with no serious injuries. The first call reporting a single apartment fire at the Briarwood Apartments, 4025 Golf Links, came into the Caddo Parish 911 center at 4:23 a.m. Minutes later, when the first fire company arrived, several upstairs apartments were totally engulfed in flames and some upstairs occupants were trapped on an outside balcony. Fire Captain J.D. Warren and his crew, firefighters Ed Carey and Corey Bell from Engine 14, immediately called for a second-alarm and laddered the outside of the building to rescue three residents - two adults and one child. As additional firefighters arrived, they along with Shreveport Police officers began running apartment to apartment of building 11 to evacuate remaining occupants. As more than 50 firefighters from 20 pieces of various equipment fought the fire and kept it from leaping over to nearby buildings, it finally began showed signs of going out around 5:45 a.m. Firefighters had made a remarkable stop on the fire and saved the remainder of the building as well as other close by apartments. The fire was not officially listed as under control until 7:00 a.m.

Local Teacher Credited With Saving 4th Grader

October 2 - Over the years, Joy LePoint wasn't sure that she would ever use any of the life safety information that she received from time-to-time from her firefighter husband Tommy. Today, the 45-year-old school teacher is being hailed as a hero by the fire department and Caddo Parish school officials after putting some of that information to good use.

Last Friday, Joy, a fourth grade teacher at Lakeshore Elementary school, noticed one of her students choking. Moments later the child stopped breathing. Joy then moved around to the back of the youth, placed the fist of one hand in the boy's stomach, and pushed in hard using the other hand, performing a picture-perfect Heimlich maneuver. Seconds later a piece of hard candy was expelled from the child's throat and he began breathing again. "It is reassuring to know that our children are in the hands of not only professional educators but individuals who can rise to the occasion should an emergency present itself," said Fire Chief kelvin Cochran, adding, "Ms. LePoint is to be commended for her actions.

Reliant-Arkla to Donate \$60,000 in Communications Equipment to Fire Department

October 6 - Reliant Energy (ARKLA) has completed an upgrade to their Mobile Data system and this is good news for the Shreveport Fire Department. Before the upgrade, Reliant utilized the same technology and Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) that the fire department currently uses. MDT's are vehicle mounted, computerized terminals with a keyboard and monitor. Each MDT is valued at \$8,000 when new and although the units being donated are used, still hold a combined value of \$60,000. Reliant hopes to provide an additional 15 units to the fire department at a date in the near future.

National Speaker Gordon Graham Lecturing at Shreveport Fire and Police Academy

Nov 4 - Nationally known speaker, author, and attorney Gordon Graham will be lecturing at the Shreveport Fire and Police Academy, 6440 Greenwood Road, Monday and Tuesday, November 4 and 5, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Graham, invited by Shreveport Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, will be speaking to area law enforcement and fire officials on issues related to organizational and operational risk management.

Graham has previously lectured at the FBI Academy, the National Fire Academy, the National Conservation training Center, and the Northwest Center for Public Safety.

State Tour of New "Spirit of Louisiana" Trucks to Stop in Shreveport Today

November 6 - Two new "Spirit of Louisiana" fire trucks will stop in Shreveport today during a statewide tour before making their final trip to New York. The last half of the nearly \$1,000,000 given by Louisiana in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks was able to build two new state of the art specialty trucks for the Fire Department of New York (FDNY). The first unit is a Decontamination "Decon" Unit for the FDNY's Division of Special Services which is the first to respond to terrorist attacks and hazardous materials situations. The other unit is a Recovery Unit specially designed with high-air capacity air conditioning and heating to allow firefighters to recover from smoke inhalation and heat at a fire scene._

ON SCENE



Interstate Accident

July 10 - An 18-wheeler jumped the center concrete divider on the I-220 bridge over the Red River and set off a chain reaction of accidents that involved 10 vehicles and sent three people to the hospital.

AROUND the DEPARTMENT

Fire Department Recognizes Best at Awards Banquet

The Shreveport Fire Department recognized their best and brightest on October 24 at their annual Awards Banquet. Held at downtown's Convention Hall, the event was attended by over 400 firefighters and their families, distinguished guests and friends of the fire department. The following individuals and groups were recognized:

- **Medal of Valor - Captain John Davis:** Awarded for Bravery in the line of duty. Captain Davis risked his life to save two other firefighters while off-duty in the Parish.
- **Outstanding SFD Member - Captain Kip Mourad:** Captain Mourad received the Medal of Valor earlier this year for the Quinton Street rescue. He was further recognized for his continued leadership and outstanding performance throughout the year.
- **Outstanding Officer of the Year - Captain Tommy Adams:** Captain Adams was recognized for his leadership and technical expertise as a paramedic.
- **Fire Chief's Award - Chief of Communications, Willis Carter:** Chief Carter was recognized for his outstanding accomplishments in running the Fire Department's Communications Division and integrating the new 800 MHz radio system.
- **Paramedic of the Year - Fire Driver Ivory Wiggins:** Fire Driver Wiggins was recognized for his medical skills and ability and professionalism in the performance of patient care at an advanced level.
- **EMT of the Year - Firefighter Keith Campbell:** Firefighter Campbell was recognized for medical ability in the performance of patient care at a basic level.
- **Medical Directors Award - Fire Driver Rick Watkins:** Fire Driver Rick Watkins was recognized for his consistent contributions to the Department's Emergency Medical Services.
- **District of the Year - District 2-C shift**
- **Team Performance Award - Engine 1-B shift**
- **Citizens Award of Merit - was awarded to Maureen Kidd** for her volunteer work with the Fire Department's K-9 Search and Rescue Team
- **Special Recognition - K-9 Search and Rescue Support Group**
- **Special Recognition Station 17-B**

Promotions & Appointments

To Chief of Aviation Task Force

Gary Caskey, Nov. 1

To Assistant to the Fire Chief

Brian A. Crawford, Dec. 1

To District Chief

David Dice, July 1

To Captain

David Allen Perry, Nov. 1
William T. Rogers

To Training Officer

Charles J. Pinkston, June 7

To Fire Inspector

Derrick T. Harris, Aug. 16
David Shidiskis, June 11

To Driver

Steve D. Smith, Nov. 1
Sedrick Young, Sept. 26
Ronnie Buckingham, July 1
Gerry Hinton, June 7

Retirements

Chief of Aviation Task Force,
Jim Miller, 24 years, Nov. 1
Assistant to the Fire Chief,
David Bryant, 28 years, Dec. 1
District Chief, Kenny Shepard,
29 years, July 1



Pictured left to Right, Medal of Valor Recipient, Captain John Davis, Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, and Outstanding Officer of the Year, Captain Tommy Adams

® FlashPoint

An official publication of the Class 1
Shreveport Fire Department
Kelvin J. Cochran, Fire Chief

Editor & Publisher

Brian A. Crawford

Contributing Members

**Gary Caskey, Kelvin Cochran, and
Mary Anne Tompkins**

FlashPoint welcomes questions or
comments. For more information on
the Shreveport Fire Department,
please contact: 318/ 673-6652,
email

brian.crawford@ci.shreveport.la.us

or visit our web site at

www.shreveportfire.org

FlashPoint, Fall 2002, Vol. 2 No. 3,
is published quarterly by the
Shreveport Fire Department.
Copyright © 2002, Shreveport Fire
Department, Shreveport, LA. 801
Crockett Street, 71101. All rights
reserved.

From the Editor's Desk

In the Streets

by **Brian A. Crawford**

It was wet. It was cold. It was, at times, dangerous. But more than anything else, it was a feeling of conviction and determination. There we were, Captain Gene Williams and his crew from Engine and Medic 5-A shift standing in the driving rain hold wilting signs with our "Vote for Fire and Police" message. Several police officers joined in and after about an hour, we had successfully seen most Shreveporters who use Youree Drive for their evening drive home. More importantly, they had seen us. It was the day before the most important event in the history of our departments and we were trying to personalize the message in those final hours.

One gentleman in a dark-blue pickup slowed down and said, "You guys must really need a raise to stand out in this . . . You've got my support." And so it went. The rain kept coming and the drivers kept honking in support. Giving us the thumbs up and grins as they drove by. Some even tried to hand us money for MDA. This time, we told them to hold their money but cast their vote "Yes!"

The next day was Tuesday, November 5 - Election Day. That day, the rain stopped, the clouds lingered, and firefighters and police officers were back out at intersections for the morning drive, during lunch hour, and finally

during the evening rush home. I spent lunch at the intersection of Linwood and 70th Street with Kenny Frazier and the crew from Engine 9-B. Also, there from Fire Prevention was Inspector Chris Robinson. Cedar Grove residents have always been very accommodating to firefighters. That day, they were as supportive as ever with words and gestures of encouragement.

Later that evening, I traveled far south to Bert Kouns and I-220 and met Captains Larry Brown and Michael Taylor and their crews from Engine 19 and Truck 20. Fire Investigator Fred Sanders was also there. Here, I can say without question, the cars travel really fast and Fire Driver Harold Johnson set the record for distributing handout ballots.

When it was all said and done, the final vote was as much about that personal contact at the intersections as anything else. More than the TV interviews, radio, newspaper and billboard ads, it placed a face, a real person, who at some point has been or will be called upon help them at one of the most critical moments of their life. The personal contact of our past performance, our performance today and the expectations for our performance tomorrow are what passed the proposition on November 5. Standing in the streets provided that personal reminder. _

FlashPoint in COLOR can be viewed
at www.shreveportfire.org Just click on
the FlashPoint logo in the middle of the
Homepage



FlashPoint

Shreveport Fire Department

801 Crockett Street
Shreveport, LA 71101